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### The Important Role of the Faculty Advisor in Credit-Bearing Internship Opportunities

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The Important Role of the  
Faculty Advisor in Credit-Bearing  
Internship Opportunities

A Project Presented to  
the Graduate Faculty of  
Minnesota State University Moorhead

By

Allison Steel Goossens

In Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Science in  
Counseling and Student Affairs

November 2018  
Moorhead, Minnesota

### Abstract

Much of the research that surrounds internships and other student experiential learning focuses on the student and the inherent benefits that they reap from such experiences. Much of this research is viewed through a developmental lens, examining how students benefit and in what conditions are conducive to the learning taking place. What is not widely noted is the work that the faculty advisors do to help facilitate that learning, ensuring that the experience is held to a high level of academic integrity. Here, the literature around this topic is explored and the importance of the faculty advisor and the role they play in credit-bearing internships is affirmed. In order to guarantee faculty are equipped to serve in that important role, a training on advising interns is suggested to ensure best practices are met. Based on the literature reviewed, topics, content, and theoretical frameworks are also presented as essential components of this faculty training.

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### The Important Role of the Faculty Advisor in Credit-Bearing Internship Opportunities

There is no doubt that experiential learning opportunities are invaluable experiences for students. These learning opportunities allow students to make meaningful connections between the classroom and the working world. Experiential learning opportunities can include experiences like internships, co-ops, service learning, problem based learning, action learning, adventure education, and (more recently) simulation and gaming experiences (Kolb & Kolb, 2017). For the purpose of this project, we will focus on and limit experiential learning experiences to internships and co-ops.

These learning opportunities have been around for many years and often times have a deep-seated place on college campuses. The majority of higher educational institutions who embrace and value the importance of experiential learning, have systems and programs in place to help ensure that students are maximizing the benefits of those experiences. Institutions also ensure that they, too, are able to reap the benefits of the data that is collected in result of those experiences. Reporting on internship and co-op participation can help with increased enrollments, institutional retention, alumni sponsorship and donation, and national recognition for placement rates in direct result from those experiences. In order to have such fruitful data, institutions must support the systems and programs in place to make sure the whole operation runs smoothly. Luckily, there are organizations like the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS), and the National Society for Experiential Education (NSEE) who study, compile, and publish best practices for running internship programs each year. These organizations stay up-to-date with experiential learning trends, challenges, legal implications, and everything in between in order to provide resources and help set national standards for well-run internship programs.

North Dakota State University (NDSU) has a centralized Internship Program operated by the Career Center on campus, which has consistently strived to meet the industry standards and best practices for internship programs since its birth in the 1990s. After recently coming under new direction, best practices were reexamined and new strategic goals have been put in place. One of the areas that calls for immediate attention, is that of orchestrating orientations for all participating stakeholders within the Internship Program.

Michael True, Senior Associate at Messiah College, author and founder of InternQube, and nationally renowned “internship guru,” reiterates the importance of the National Society for Experiential Education’s (NSEE) “Eight Principles of Good Practice for All Experiential Learning Activities” (1998) in his published manual, *Academic Standards and Best Practices for Internships*, (2018). The NSEE practice that he highlights within his manual covers the importance of orientation and training to both the learner, the learning facilitators (faculty advisors and internship supervisors), and any other involved organizational partners (i.e. internship coordinators and academic department personnel). This NSEE practice is in place to ensure the full value of the experience is explained to all parties involved. Part of this practice involves conducting orientation sessions for each group involved. Michael True (2018) and successful internship programs (recognize that the most positive outcomes are produced when students first understand the expectations from the university. Students immediately become representatives of the university once they step out into their internship. They represent the institution as a whole and how they present themselves is extremely important for the relationship between the university and the employer. In addition to students, it is important to hold orientations with both employers and faculty as well. This is how it can be sure the employer understands their supervisory role and duties pertaining to the internship and the

faculty advisor understands their role in providing guidance and academic evaluation for the student. These orientation sessions must be thoughtfully crafted and presented to each group in order for the program to be working at its full potential. There are a lot of moving parts involved in setting up a credit-bearing internship and all players must be presented with a consistent message and up-to-date information each semester. The NDSU Career Center's Internship Program, unfortunately, does not have any of these orientations in place – yet.

The NDSU Internship Program does have a collection of online resources that have provided each stakeholder (student, employer, and faculty) with the basic information for participation within the program. However, in order for the program to be in accordance to best practices and flourish into the program that the higher institutional administration hopes to see, there needed to be a starting point, and that starting point begins with the faculty. This literature review, as a whole, is meant to validate the overall rationale for maintaining a well-run internship program and implementing a faculty advisor training session, specifically for the NDSU Internship Program.

### **Literature Review**

All internship programs are designed to meet the needs of the student populations they serve and the academic programs with which they collaborate, meaning there is an infamous number of program models that are practiced all over the nation. One of the most standard models involves four different parties: the student, the internship supervisor, the faculty advisor, and the administration (sometimes an academic department or a centralized internship/co-op office). In order to understand the importance of each part and the benefits they experience through experiential learning, it is important to understand how all of the moving parts work together to make meaningful experiences happen for students.

It is argued that internship programs need to be well planned and executed to avoid negative experiences for students (Sosland & Lowenthal, 2017). For example, if the administrative internship program staff does not properly vet each internship experience (by evaluating the company and receiving valuable input from the faculty advisor), an intern could end up spending a semester making copies in positions that are unrelated to their academic studies or career goals. A key area of stress for interns has been identified as not having a solid understanding of their responsibilities and duties as an intern (Montague & Violette, 2017). Quality position descriptions to determine if an experience is going to be worthwhile for a student is the first step in vetting an internship. Some students have the insight and experience to do this on their own, but for many students, finding an internship may be the first time they are looking for a position within a company. It's important to guide students through that process and teach them the correct lens in which to view opportunities and teach them about job search strategies like researching companies and looking at industry trends. Faculty don't always have the expertise or the time to play this role, which is why it is such an important role that the administrative staff contributes to the experiential learning process.

The administrative role can be defined in many different ways. Some programs will have designated internship coordinators, some may have field experience directors, while others operate from a centralized career center or co-op office and coordinate between several different departments across campus. The structure of how this piece is represented looks different depending on the importance the university places on experiential learning, if the campus has a centralized or decentralized career center, and if departments have the personnel or faculty who are willing to take on such a role. But it is an important role. Not only do these individuals vet opportunities for students, they also need to be the connection between the university and the



employers in the community and beyond. To be effective in this role, a good field director will also stay up-to-date on industry trends and the needs of the immediate community and even the needs of various regions on the nation. Some field director positions are actually obtained by faculty because these positions have influence on curriculum and pedagogy within the department, as it relates to field experience (Wertheimer & Sodhi, 2014). This model makes sense too. If an actual faculty member is researching industry trends and truly understands the needs of the community, they should have influence on curriculum and pedagogical techniques that are used within their department. If programs are adapting to the needs of the workforce, the better the student outcomes will be, which usually culminates into higher enrollment and quality programming.

This is why coordination between all parties and fluid communication between all parties is paramount for running a successful and rewarding internship program. To better understand the need for collaboration and fluid communication between all entities of an internship experience, it is important to understand how each individual part is involved and how each party benefits from participation.

### **Student Benefits**

As stated before, the benefits are inherent for students who complete an internship or co-op. There have been countless studies and research conducted regarding these benefits (Gilbert, Banks, Houser, Rhodes, & Douglas, 2014; York & Fernandez, 2018) which are unanimously positive. Participation in internships can also be a great benefit to certain student populations. Underrepresented students (including, but not limited to, students with financial need, first generation college students, and students of color) who participate in experiential learning can learn valuable skills through these out-of-the-classroom learning opportunities. By participating

in these experiences, these groups of students prove to have better outcomes and feel more prepared to enter the world of work or apply for graduate school (Means, Bryant, Crutchfield, Jones, & Wade, 2016). Students have continuously proven that completing an out of classroom experience can lead to increased overall employability, expedited employment, higher starting salaries, increased engagement in the classroom, increased professionalism, and heightened technical skills. In a recent study, funded by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), the career outcomes data collected at Endicott College (a college that requires a full semester internship as an academic requirement) proves these benefits to be true. The report states that of the 2015 graduating class, 98% of the graduates were employed in full-time or part-time positions, continuing education, enlisted in the military, or self-employed. The other interesting part of the report stated that 90% of the students who were employed were working directly in fields related to their majors. Even more telling was that 53% reported that they obtained their positions directly from their internships or internship contacts (Saltikoff, 2017). Equally impressive statistics, such as those from Endicott College can be found among many academic institutions, especially those with strong internship programs, proving time and time again that exposure to the working world is one of the greatest benefits to a college student (Vélez & Giner, 2014).

Measuring high-impact experiences that students participate in is a trend at many universities. High-impact experiences can include programming like: first-year seminars, learning communities, undergraduate research, internships, service learning, capstone courses and many more. The commonality between all of these experiences is that they are not experienced in a traditional classroom setting – they either happen in a different format or a different environment, but it is proven that the more high-impact experiences students are

exposed to lead to better levels of attainment and programmatic outcomes (Kilgo, Sheets, & Pascarella, 2014). Internships are a great way to reach that high-level of learning, especially when a student is earning credit for the experience.

It's important to note, however, that these benefits are not realized on their own. The effectiveness of an internship can be determined by the amount of autonomy in the internship position (in most cases, the greater the better), challenging assignments and projects from the employer, a students' positive outlook and attitude, and quality mentoring. The internship supervisor and faculty advisor all play their part in helping the student reap the full potential of the learning experience.

### **Employer Benefits and Involvement**

Taking on an intern comes with many benefits for employers and generally at a pretty low cost. Many employers see internships as a pipeline to full-time employment. They look at an internship position as an investment in a potential future employee or an extended interview. Hosting an intern can also bring fresh perspectives to the workplace as long as students are encouraged to contribute and voice their thoughts. And we all know that students talk. So if students are having good experiences within certain organizations, companies can quickly earn a glowing reputation among other college students and internship programs. Companies can also build relationships with faculty members through internships, yet again, increasing their involvement and visibility on campus (Vélez & Giner, 2014). All of these benefits are pretty much guaranteed, as long as the internship supervisor agrees to follow best practices and any agreements or contracts between the student, university, or faculty advisors.

The internship supervisors usually have the best knowledge of how an intern is doing, how well they are absorbing information from the industry, and if they exhibit appropriate

professionalism and skills in the workplace. Internship supervisors many times take on the role of facilitating professional networking opportunities for students, whether that is introducing the intern to other professional within the company or other professionals who are customers or community members. The site supervisor should also help guide the student in thinking critically and making the connections between the skills they are learning in the workplace and how those skills should translate back to the classroom, animating the classroom theory (Sosland & Lowenthal, 2017). A good internship supervisor will do all of these things. They will inquire about a student's coursework or speak to the student's faculty advisor to ensure that the intern is making meaning from the hands-on experiences and using theoretical frameworks that are taught in the classroom. Because the internship supervisor spends the most time with the student intern, it is crucial that the faculty are aware of the important role that supervisors play and understand how to communicate with them in order to properly assess the student. This is where the coordination and fluid communication between all parties becomes crucial. Usually the internship supervisor completes an evaluation of the intern, but the student also completes additional assignments that are assessed by the faculty advisor. Both pieces must check out in order for the student to receive a passing grade. While some internship programs rely more heavily on the employer evaluations rather than the faculty involvement, to have a truly substantial internship experience for the student, the faculty must play their part.

**Faculty Benefits**

The more faculty who support experiential learning and the more faculty who know about internship programming going on at their own institutions, the more they can integrate those valuable experiences into their classroom discussions and reap the rewards of being involved as advisors. Students who have participated in internships can often times help their peers make the

connection between the theories discussed in class and their own past experiences while working within the industry. Faculty can also learn about the top companies in particular industries, and learn about what employers look for in recent graduates. This can help faculty shape their curriculum to ensure they are preparing their students for life after academia. In an exploratory investigation completed at a large, public university in the southwestern region of the United States, Dommeyer, Gross, and Ackerman (2016) came to determine key areas of success and areas of improvement among 279 business students completing an internship within the field of marketing. From the survey results, 40% of the respondents indicated that they were surprised by how much they learned in their internship and just behind “learning about how a business is run” and next highest ranking answer to what the greatest benefit was from the internship, students indicated that getting real work experience in the field of marketing was a huge benefit. Students did, however, indicate that the business school needed to do their part as well. Students expressed that in some cases they wished they had been better equipped to complete the internship. They mentioned the need for increased exposure to “real-world” examples and case studies that yield practical application of theory. The students mentioned that currently with the higher emphasis placed on the role of social media in business it would be beneficial for the college to offer courses in digital marketing, web design, and engine optimization. Hearing this feedback from the students is crucial for faculty who are writing and adjusting curriculum. In order to maintain robust programs in academia, practical application must be brought into the classrooms.

Through internship involvement, faculty can also build relationships with employers who often times are able to give back to academic programs as a part of their recruitment plan. At NDSU, area employers have been known to donate equipment, fund projects for senior capstone

courses, or sponsor other initiatives for certain academic departments. These partnerships can be very fruitful for universities, where money is always tight and resources often in short supply.

### **Faculty Involvement and Faculty Limitations**

Most programs offer a few different options for earning credits. Student can earn elective credits, credits that are applied directly to their major, or some combination of the two. In all cases, however, students who earn credit for an internship experience will always have the experience validated on their transcript, which often times is important to potential employers. An exciting trend happening in higher education is the fact that more and more curriculum is being developed to include time for an experiential learning component. Some institutions have taken it a step further, by making internships a requirement for graduation. Earning credits is a wonderful benefit for the student, but credit-bearing internships also call for the establishment of criteria for a program, assessing the intended learning outcomes, and finally awarding the actual credit (CAS, 2015). All of these components demand faculty engagement and involvement—something that not all faculty are in favor of, nor support.

In order to make a credit-bearing experience “credit-worthy,” the faculty advisor must be involved and invested in the process. To start, faculty advisors often times approve each student’s internship, ensuring that it meets departmental requirements and university policies. They must also confirm that the student will be doing meaningful work, within their academic field. This often means that faculty must review positions descriptions and sometimes speak with an employer for additional information about the position. All of this is in place to, once again, ensure that the student is getting the best experience from their opportunity. This process, however, is heavy on the administration side and light on the teaching and advising side. Many

times, well-established internship programs can take care of some of these pieces, but the faculty must still be willing to do some extra administrative work as well.

To understand the real sentiments of faculty regarding experiential learning, we can look to a study conducted by McCurdy and Zegwaard (2009), who tried to assess how faculty embraced or resented work integrated learning. Overall, the faculty members agreed that work integrated learning (or experiential learning) was a positive experience for students, reporting that these experiences enhanced students' hard and soft skills and students' overall professionalism. In regards to the benefits faculty experienced on a personal level, the majority of responders felt like their contributions to these learning programs were unrecognized and undervalued. In fact, only 16% of faculty felt that involvement with these programs enhanced their own careers. Only 19% found that involvement enabled joint research opportunities, and an even smaller percentage reported to have secured external funding opportunities through company partnerships. Unfortunately, these findings aren't promising for the goal of increasing faculty involvement, nor are the other limitations that can hold faculty back.

Faculty already have many constraints on their time. From teaching courses, conferencing with students, collaborating with colleagues, conducting and publishing research, serving on committees, and keeping up with the day to day tasks is already a high ask of such intelligent members of academia. Asking a faculty member to then advise an intern on top of it all can just be too much. The majority of internship advising models do not allow for compensation. Most of the faculty advisors agree to advise students as they receive the request. Taking on these extra advising tasks can take away from research opportunities or opportunities that could lead to tenure. Kolb and Kolb (2017) point out that staffing the advising of internships is often times seen as subsidiary work and many times will be staffed by lower status student

development professionals or less experienced faculty. This doesn't always make the most sense if a program has the goals of creating a robust and thriving internship program. Advising an intern also means that the additional work is continuous throughout the duration of the experience. Ongoing assessment is vital especially when facilitating and measuring the enhancement of critical thinking among student interns, an important component of learning in any practical experience (Arter, Wallace, & Shaffer, 2016). Full engagement of the faculty advisor is also crucial. This is paramount in order to keep students accountable for their decisions and actions in their placements. If students are not held to a high standard by their advisor, they may begin to lose sight of the connections between the classroom and the workplace, and to ensure that faculty will hold their interns to high standards and uphold the best practices when serving as a faculty advisor they must also feel supported by the administration.

### **The Need for Faculty Training**

All best practices for running an internship program point toward the need for guidance and training for the students, employers, and faculty. As noted before, the Internship Program at NDSU does not have any structured trainings or orientations in place, but has chosen to focus on the development of the faculty training first, and for a good reason. Faculty internship advisors are in place to ensure that students are getting credit-worthy experiences. Without a training to educate the faculty about the best practices and the need to uphold academic rigor, the integrity of credit-bearing experiential learning experiences is in jeopardy.

To provide structure to this training, many internship programs rely on Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) to help faculty understand the important part they play. Kolb defines his theory as a dynamic and holistic approach, which calls on the process of learning from a multi-dimensional developmental platform (Kolb & Kolb, 2017). One of the most important parts of



the ELT, is the reflective component. A student first experiences a concrete experience, then reflects upon the experience, applies theoretical knowledge and knowledge about past experiences, and then actively experiments to fully understand the initial concrete concept. Best practices reveal that faculty should be developing reflective assignments for the student in order to help them fulfill Kolb's learning cycle. Reflective assignments, such as reflection journaling, can be the connection between our inner dialog, personal thoughts, and feelings (Arter et al. 2016). The assignment(s) that accompanies the internship experience many times is the sole connector between theory and practical application for the student. And even though the typical college student may grumble about completing journal reflections or a summative reflective paper at the end of their experience, the truth is, the work is meaningful and valuable for them. In a recent study (Cuyler & Hodges, 2015), students from the arts and humanities disciplines indicated that they supported faculty who assigned reflective papers and the creation of a portfolio throughout the internship experience. Each discipline will vary, but for an arts and humanities student, coming out of an internship with experience and a portfolio of the work that was completed, will certainly set that student up to be a desired candidate when they begin the job search process. Completing these additional assignments can be the catalyst for self-discovery and conceptualization for a student, but for college-aged students, the reflective and conceptualization aspects of the cycle can be challenging without direction and guidance.

It is said that "surprises" or unexpected experiences is where the most learning occurs, however, there is a delicate balance between learning from those experiences and becoming more withdrawn from those experiences. Often times the learning will occur only if the individual feels somewhat secure and supported during that learning experience. This is why direction and guidance during an internship is crucial for the student intern. This guidance can

come from their site supervisor, but to facilitate true learning that the student will be able to carry with them back into the classroom environment, means the guidance should come from their faculty advisor.

One construct that illustrates the importance of the faculty advisor's guidance or presence as the student intern learns new concepts is Lev Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development Theory. Although the zone of proximal development, mainly describes the difference between a *child's* performance with or without a teacher, this theory also can be applied to the internship advisor – student intern relationship. Vygotsky's theory argued that children retain more information and learn new things when they have assistance in their learning. This type of learning, he concluded, fosters future development and creates more potential for independent student learning later (Beliavsky, 2006). There are three major zones in this theory and are recognized most often when an image of a target is used. The center of the target represents the *comfort zone*. The next outer ring represents the *learning zone*, and the most outer ring represents the *panic zone*. As mentioned before, most learning happens when we experience an unexpected event, meaning that the ideal learning point occurs on the edge of the *learning zone* and the *panic zone*. To achieve that fine balance between learning and panicking a student must feel supported and guided, otherwise, it becomes quite easy to fall into the panic mode and lose all opportunity for learning altogether.

Best practices also indicated that faculty advisors should also help students in the development of learning objectives prior to their experiential learning experiences so that students take advantage of their positions and do the most learning possible. Developing thoughtful learning objectives can help give structure to a student's experience and give the student a more directed purpose and initiative while they are in their positions. Once these

learning objectives are developed, it is crucial for the faculty to provide ongoing and continuous assessment and guidance in the completion of those objectives. This is, once again, why the fluid communication and involvement of all parties is so crucial for a quality internship experience.

### **Conclusion**

Running a quality internship program takes strong partnerships and collaboration from all parties involved. Following best practices and continuously improving programming and procedures can help any program ensure quality for their interns. The Internship Program at NDSU will surely grow in quality and impact once best practices are established and resources and trainings are developed for students, employers, and faculty. By focusing on the development of the faculty training, first, the program can gain traction in many different academic departments, establishing relationships with those who dictate internship requirements. The more career-related curriculum that is implemented into undergraduate degree requirements, the more prepared students will be and the greater the employment outcomes will be for higher education institutions. Experiential learning is important and should be implemented with best practices in mind and academic integrity forever at the center.

# INTERNSHIP FACULTY ADVISOR TRAINING

CAREER CENTER | INTERNSHIP PROGRAM



# OVERVIEW OF THE TRAINING

- The benefits of internships
- Components of an internship experience
- The role of the faculty advisor
- Best practices in faculty advising
- Developing a Learning Plan

# INTERNSHIP PROGRAM GOALS AND BENEFITS

- Enhance student placement opportunities
- Develop and maintain business and university relationships
- Prepare students to be successful in the world of work upon graduation
- Internships should guide students in applying theory and research directly to work experience

# INTERNSHIP PROGRAM GOALS AND BENEFITS

- Enhance student placement opportunities
- Develop and maintain business and university relationships
- Prepare students to be successful in the world of work upon graduation
- Internships should guide students in applying theory and research directly to work experience

**\* INTERNSHIPS SHOULD BENEFIT ALL THREE PARTIES EQUALLY \***

# THE BENEFITS OF INTERNSHIPS



STUDENT

|59%|



EMPLOYER

|70.6%|




FACULTY

|90%|

B E N E F I T S



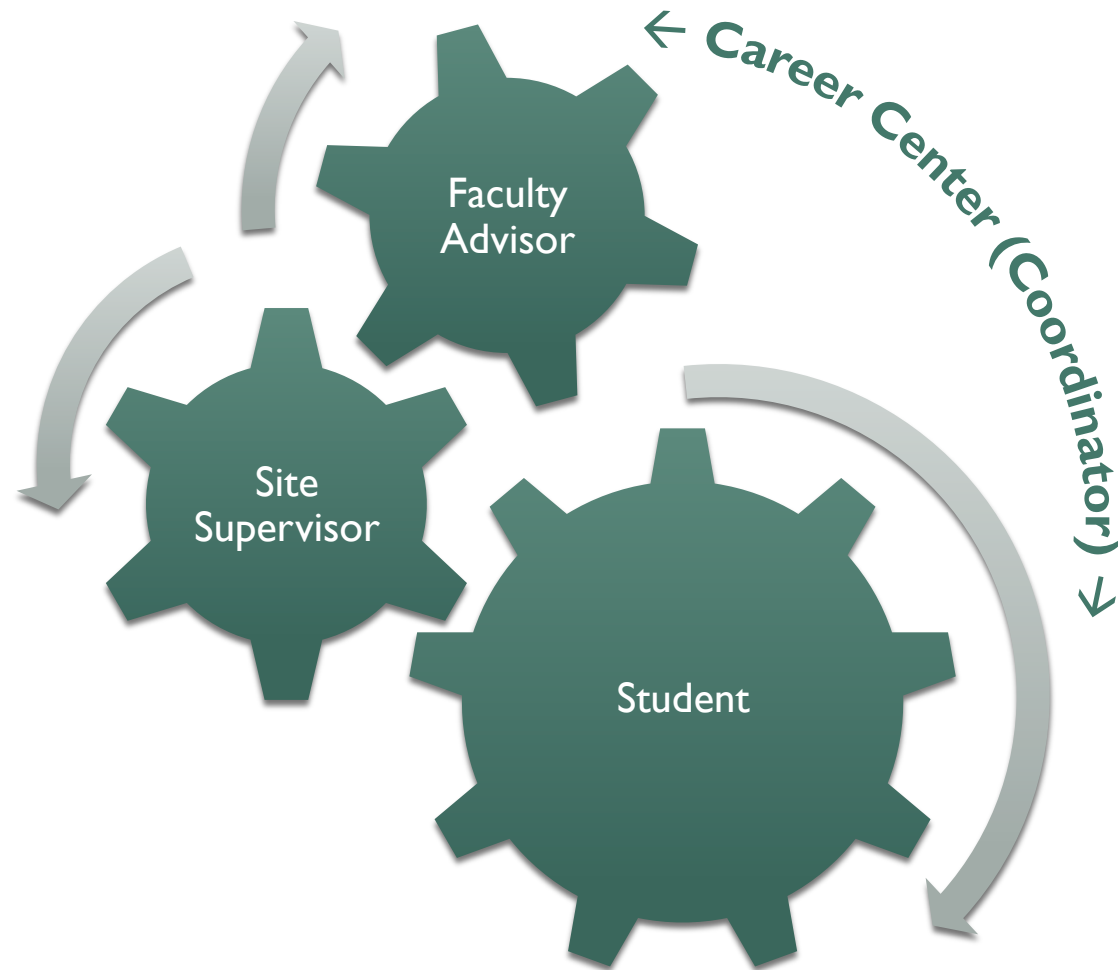
# THE ROLES WE PLAY



Student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Directly participates in an experiential learning experience</li></ul>
Faculty Advisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Serves as the connection to academics, supports the student, and facilitates learning</li></ul>
Site Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provides day-to-day feedback and supervision for the student</li></ul>
Coordinator (Administration)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Manages all entities of the internship process and provides resources for success</li></ul>

# COMPONENTS OF AN INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

*Coordination between all parties and fluid communication between all parties is paramount for running a successful and rewarding internship program.*



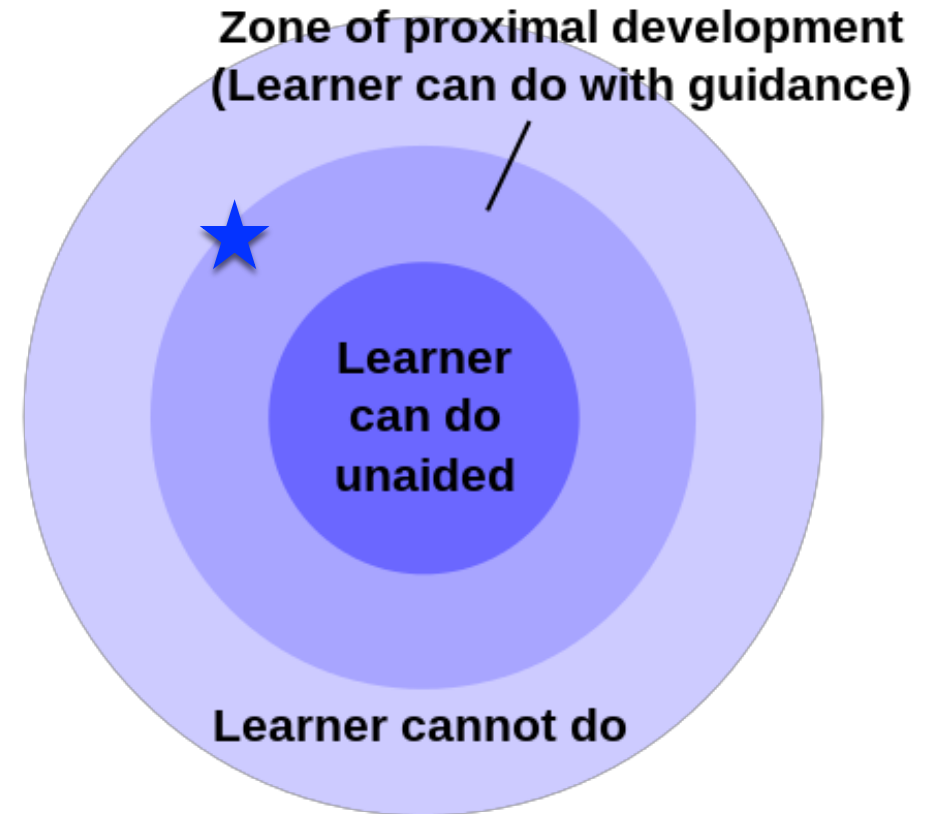
# FACULTY ADVISOR ROLE

- Approve internship experiences
- Meet with student intern to:
  - Review expectations
  - Create learning objectives
  - Complete a learning plan
- Check in with the student
- Evaluate additional assignments
- Recommend grade for experience



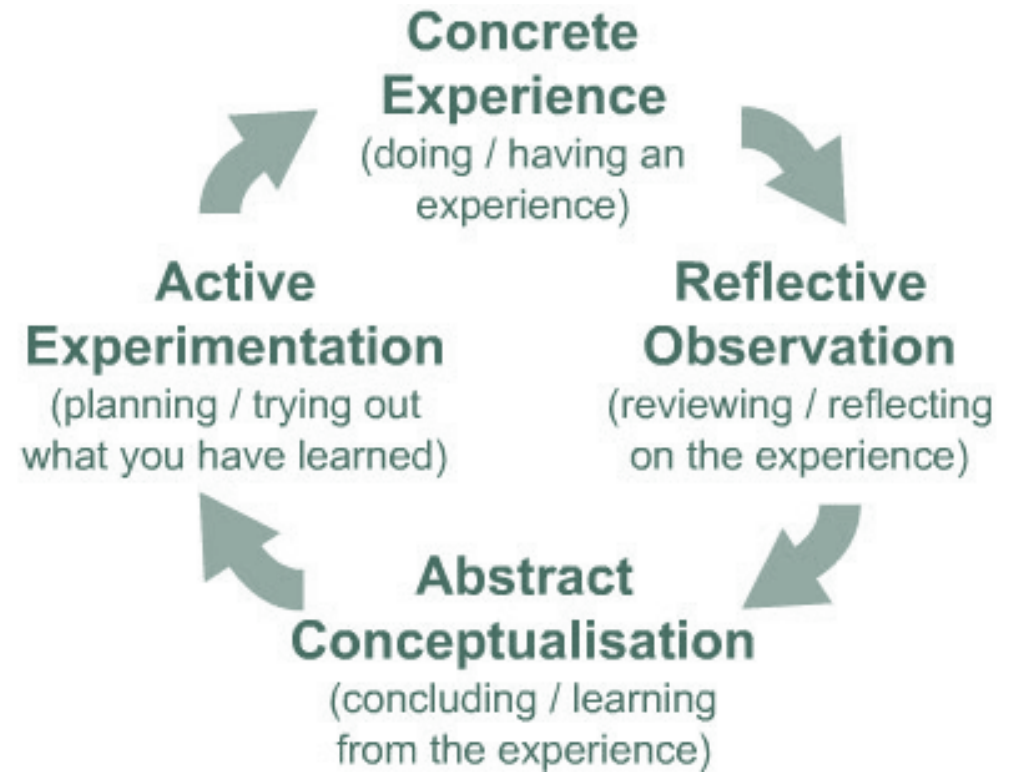
# FACULTY GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

- Lev Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development Theory
- Faculty's role in guided learning
- Creating a support system

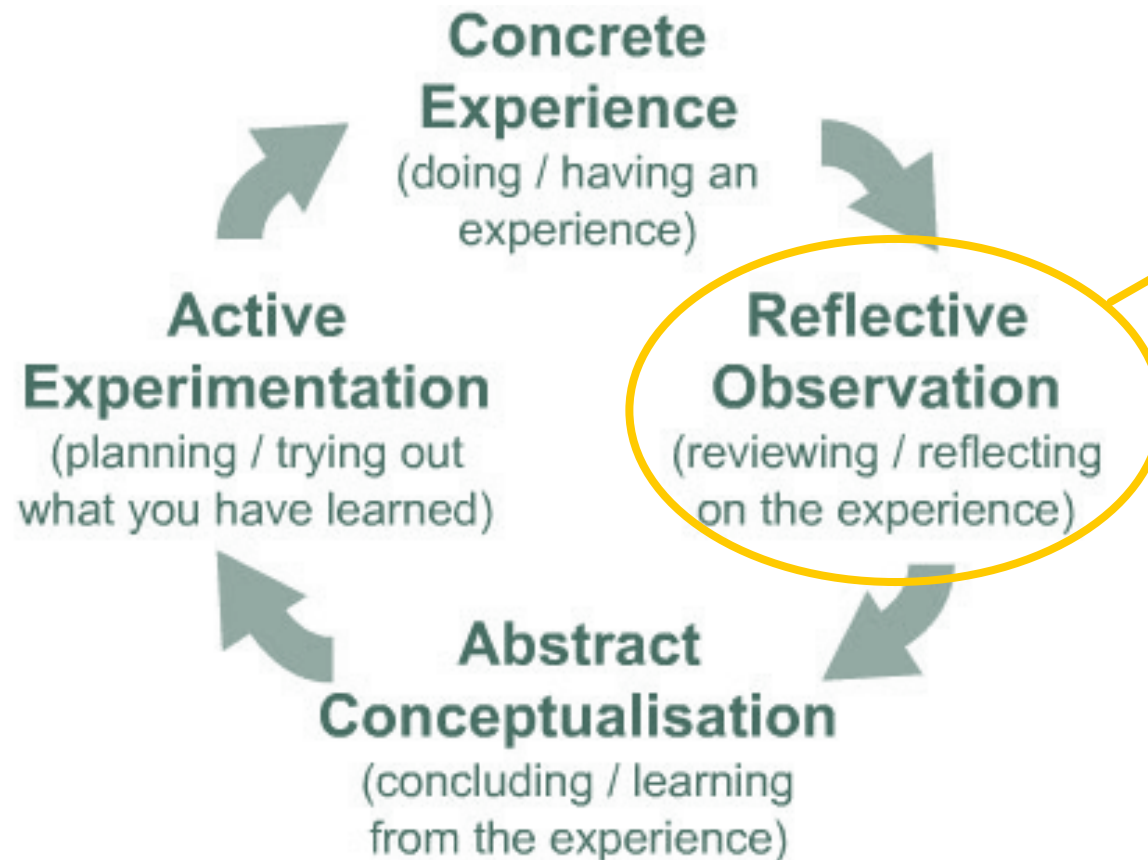


# KOLB'S EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING THEORY

- Completion of the cycle will ensure a holistic learning experience for the student
- Guidance must be provided in order to ensure the reflective process reaches fruition during each stage
- Faculty can help facilitate the objectives for each stage in this model

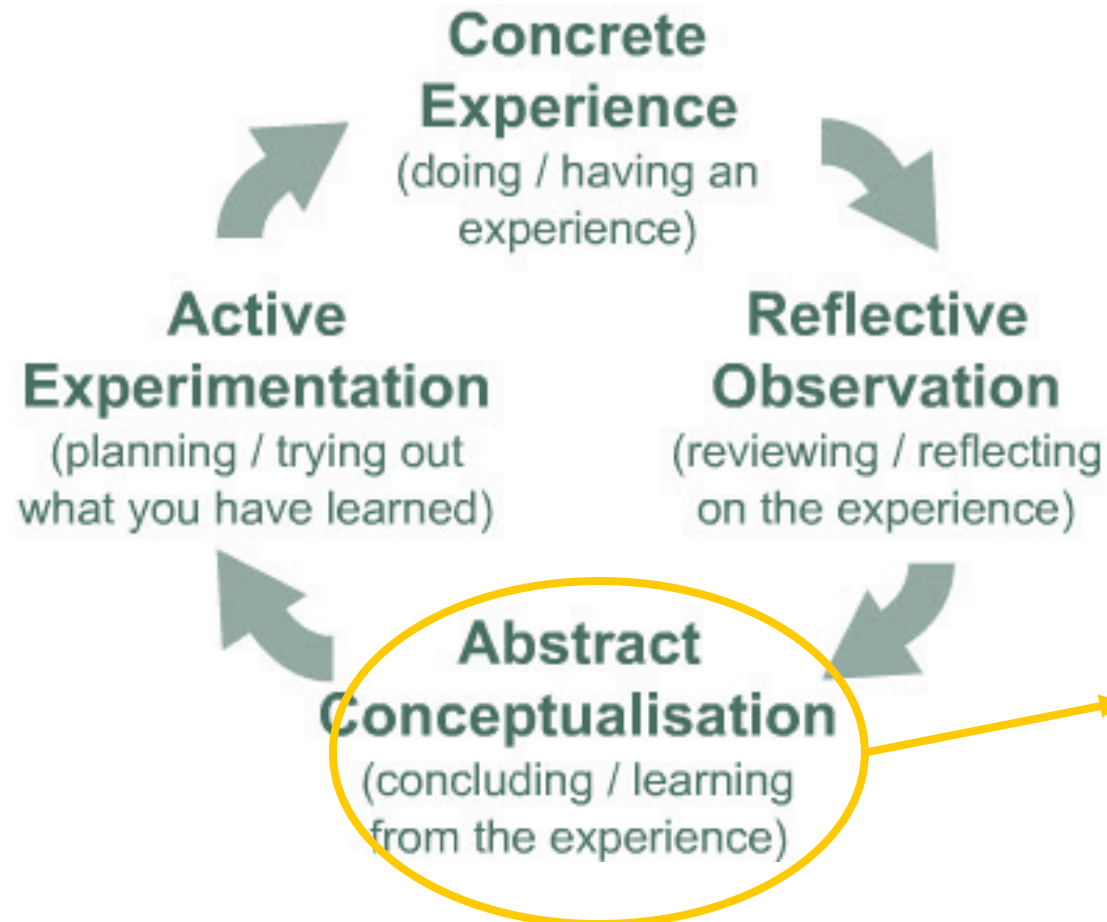


# FACULTY'S ROLE IN KOLB'S THEORY



Help foster student reflection by giving students reflective prompts that challenge them to think deeply and articulate their experiences.

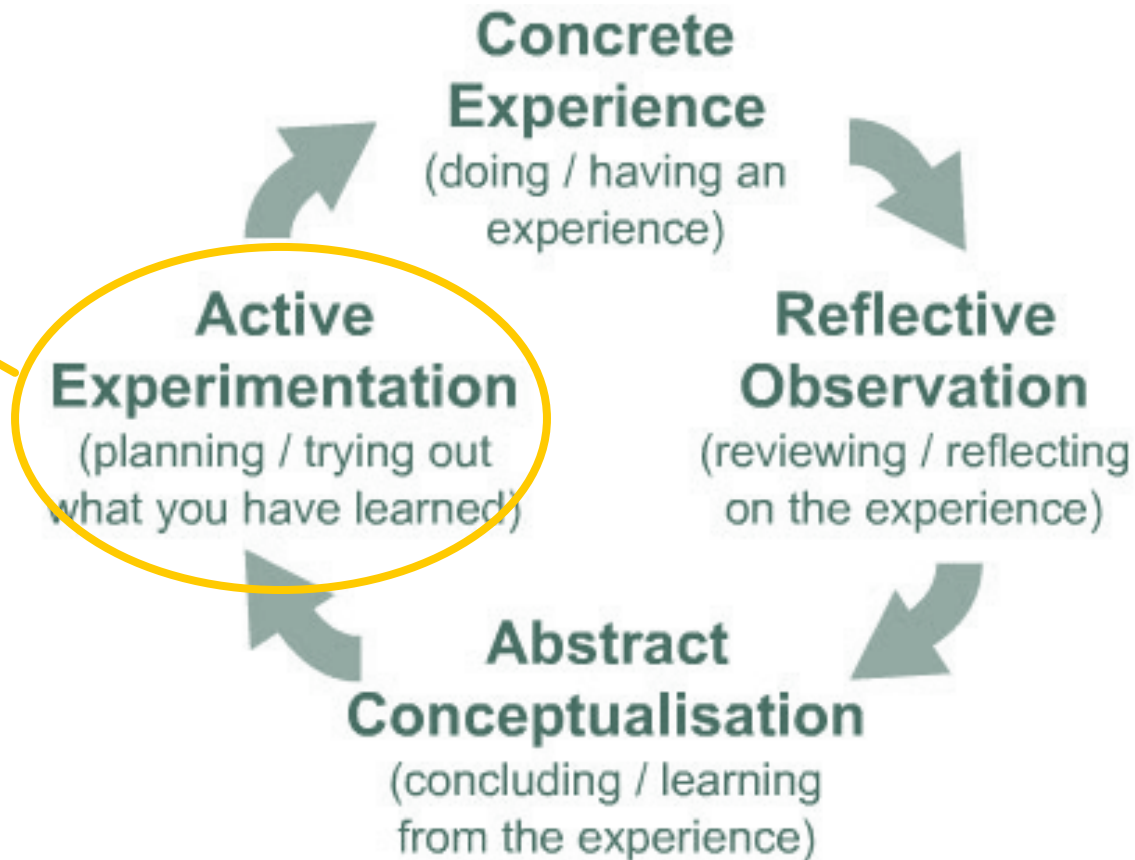
# FACULTY'S ROLE IN KOLB'S THEORY



Help students connect their reflective thoughts to theory learned in the classroom and ask them to articulate how they are using these constructs.

# FACULTY'S ROLE IN KOLB'S THEORY

Encourage students to continue to think in experimental ways. Ask students how they will implement what they learned from their experience in the future.





# BEST PRACTICES FOR FACULTY INTERNSHIP ADVISING

- Co-create learning objectives with intern
- Design a “Learning Plan” that includes objectives, goals, and expectations
- Check in with the student throughout the experience
- Promote student reflection through conversations, correspondence, required assignments, etc.
- Evaluate the student's experience from academic lens

# THE “LEARNING PLAN”

## Internship Learning Plan

### Learning Objectives

Co-created by the student and faculty advisor (3-5)

Considers academic learning objectives as well as the learning opportunities in the internship

### SMART Goals

Created by the student, reviewed by faculty advisor (2-3)

Must be: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Timely

### Expectations

Develop a communication plan

Review requirements for additional assignments

Discuss evaluation/grading process

# QUESTIONS & FINAL COMMENTS



**Appendix B****INTERNSHIP FACULTY ADVISOR TRAINING NOTES**

Description: The purpose of this training is to inform faculty of the important role they play when advising student interns. The training was developed in order to educate the participants on the benefits of an internship, the components of an internship program, and best practices in the field for credit-bearing experiences.

Utilization: This training is meant to be adaptable to meet the needs of many different internship program designs and (in some cases) for a variety of audiences beyond faculty. Including specific information about an institution's philosophy on internships, specifics about an institution's internship programs, and specific details about the logistics of those programs (registrations processes, approval process, policies and procedures, etc.) is *highly* recommended.

**SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION TO TRAINING**

- I. Slide 1: [Title slide]
- II. Presenter introduction
- III. Purpose of the training
- IV. Set expectations and norms for the training session
- V. Slide 2: Overview of The Training
  - a. The Benefits of Internships
  - b. Components of an Internship Experience
  - c. The Role of the Faculty Advisor
  - d. Best Practices in Faculty Advising – Theory
  - e. Best Practices in Faculty Advising – In Practice
  - f. [Questions and Final Comments]

**SECTION TWO: THE BENEFITS OF INTERNSHIPS**

- VI. Slide 3-4: Internship Program Goals and Benefits
  - a. Enhance student placement opportunities
    - i. Many times and in most cases, students need experience in order to gain full-time employment come graduation
    - ii. Students also need experiences in order to gain entrance into graduate school.
    - iii. Students need a bridge between the classroom and actual practice of theory, and internships can service that need.
  - b. Develop and maintain business and university relationships

- i. Sponsorship, donors, private funding – these are all things that can come out of partnerships built from employers who host interns.
  - ii. Brand recognition for the university as well – interns out in the community where their school's badge in everything they do. They represent the institution.
- c. Prepare students to be successful in the world of work upon graduation
  - i. Internships serve as an experience that develops students' soft and technical skills, prepares them for professional workplace culture, and allows the student an opportunity to become self-aware in their own preferences in the workplace.
- d. Internships should guide students in applying theory and research directly to work experience
  - i. This is often accomplished with the direction of a faculty advisor – they are the connector in this aspect.
- e. Internships should benefit ALL three parties.

VII. Slide 5: The Benefits of Internships

- a. Students:
  - i. Benefits are inherent – there is no research out there that says students have been negatively impacted (from a learning perspective) by completing an internship (granted the internship was legal and the student wasn't impacted physically or emotionally by the experience)
    - 1. Even if it is a poor experience, students are still learning from the exposure to the workplace
    - 2. Students learn technical skills, soft skills, and workplace professionalism (from writing appropriate emails to speaking up during a staff meeting)
    - 3. Student get hands-on experience, making the connection between theory learned in the classroom and actual practice
  - ii. Use internships for exploratory purposes:
    - 1. Test a career path before graduation
    - 2. Explore different areas within an industry
    - 3. Identify key personal preferences when choosing a place of work (the importance of culture, physical environment, location, team-based, etc.)

- iii. In the 2018 NACE Internship and Co-op Survey Report, respondents reported that **59% of student interns were offered a full-time positions** after the completion of their internship
- b. Employers:
  - i. Hosting an internship can bring fresh perspectives to the workplace
  - ii. Test out an employee before offering full-time employment
    - 1. i.e. the “Extended interview”
    - 2. Low-cost investment for potential employees
  - iii. Built-in company marketing strategy – students talk (they become brand ambassadors)
  - iv. Build relationships with faculty and staff on colleges campuses – increasing brand awareness and visibility
  - v. According to NACE, **70.6%** is the retention rate after one year of employment for hired interns (*internal* hires)
  - vi. And **65.8%** is the retention rate for intern hires who worked at *external* internship sites
- c. Faculty:
  - i. This group is harder... as advising internships obviously takes time and energy, without any compensation BUT...
  - ii. Build relationships with students – this is why we all work in higher ed...to be able to work with students
  - iii. Build relationships with employers and industry leaders
    - 1. Learn about industry trends and ways to augment their curriculum with the needs of the economy
    - 2. Access to guest speakers from top companies to come into classrooms or student organizations you may advise
    - 3. Potential sponsorship opportunities and donations to academic departments
      - a. Money is always tight in higher ed (especially for academic departments), but if private funding can come in, it benefits the department and students
      - b. Example: Edie Bailly – they obviously have a great working relationship with the COB, hence the Edie

Bailly conference room! Companies may also be interested in investing in projects for students to work on (win-win for all)

- iv. Students who have participated in internships can bring valuable perspectives to the classroom
- v. The more students who complete internships within their field, the better the retention is for the program
  - 1. **90% of the 2015 graduates from Endicott College (about 3,000 students) got employment *within their field of study***
  - 2. \*Students at Endicott College ALL participate in required internships throughout their college experience (3 to be exact)
- vi. A percentage like 90% will certainly help validate academic programs and departments for enrollment and retention purposes – we all know that more students = more money

### **SECTION THREE: COMPONENTS OF AN INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE**

#### **VIII. Slide 6: The Roles We Play**

- a. Student - Directly participates in an experiential learning experience
- b. Faculty Advisor - Serves as the connection to academics, supports the student, and facilitates learning
- c. Site Supervisor - Provides day-to-day feedback and supervision for the student
- d. Coordinator (Administration) - Manages all entities of the internship process and provides resources for success

#### **IX. Slide 7: Components of an Internship Experience**

- a. [In reference to the model image]: This is the model that we are working towards
- b. All parties must work together in order to create the most meaningful experience for the student.
- c. That means coordination between all parties and fluid communication between all parties is paramount.
- d. This is truly what a successful program looks like.
  - i. This is where you, as the faculty member, can see how you fit into this picture.

- ii. You can see that your role here looks integrated – which it should be. You also have access to the site supervisor and administrator. It's one program working for all the parties.

#### **SECTION FOUR: THE ROLE OF THE FACULTY ADVISOR**

##### **X. Slide 8: Faculty Advisor Role**

- a. Approve internship experiences
- b. Meet with student intern to:
  - i. Review expectations
    - 1. Communication expectations and practices throughout the experience
    - 2. Utilization of technology and learning platforms (D2L, Blackboard, email, hour tracking apps/systems, other educational tools, career center tools, etc.)
    - 3. Grading process, rubrics, evaluation
  - ii. Create learning objectives
    - 1. Co-create these with the student
    - 2. Can relate to area of study and what they are doing academically OR they could relate more to their career goals
    - 3. Utilizing the PD of the internship position will be helpful in this process
    - 4. Decide whether students will be able to adjust these once they get into the experience – there can be added value in assessing objectives midway through a semester in order to yield a desired outcome and ensure the objective aligns with the work they are doing
  - iii. Complete a learning plan
    - 1. The learning plan should really incorporate all of the aforementioned things (expectations, the created objectives, SMART goals the student may have, grading policies, etc.)
    - 2. This can be adapted to any program – should reflect the values and mission of that internship program and agreement between the student and the faculty member



- c. Check in with the student
  - i. Make a decision on how this will happen
  - ii. Decide how often and make a plan for implementation (reminders on your calendar, notifications on your phone, set dates to meet with the student before the semester begins, etc.)
- d. Evaluate additional assignments
  - i. Provide rubrics and other resources that the student will need to complete the assignment
  - ii. Create deadlines and dates (if possible, create these with the student – giving the student the opportunity to give input as well)
- e. Recommend grade for experience
  - i. Follow grading structures and policies around this idea
  - ii. Contact the appropriate people and ensure the student is aware of the procedures as well

## **SECTION FIVE: BEST PRACTICES IN FACULTY ADVISING – THEORY**

### **XI. Slide 9: Faculty Guidance and Support**

- a. Lev Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development Theory
  - i. Scenario: Riding a bike or giving a speech
  - ii. Vygotsky's theory argued that children retain more information and learn new things when they have assistance in their learning. This type of learning, he concluded, fosters future development and creates more potential for independent student learning later.
  - iii. Three zones of the theory – show on image/graphic
  - iv. Point out on chart where we want the interns to be in order for them to get the most of their experience
- b. Guided learning
  - i. Zone of Proximal Development Theory is a great way to define the importance of guided learning
  - ii. Faculty can serve that need for guidance by engaging with their interns during their experience and provide support in order to enhance their capabilities in the workplace.

- iii. Support system: faculty are a part of that support system for the student who is out on internship – especially when it comes to content of the work the student may be doing

XII. Slide 10: Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory

- a. One of the main staples in experiential learning models
- b. Completion of the cycle will ensure holistic learning experience for the student
- c. Guidance must be provided in order to ensure the reflective process reaches fruition during each stage
- d. Faculty can help facilitate the objectives for each stage in this model
- e. Explain each stage [see/utilize Appendix A]

XIII. Slide 11 – 13: Faculty's Role in Kolb's Theory

- a. Reflective Observation stage
  - i. Faculty can help foster student reflection by giving students reflective prompts that challenge them to think deeply and articulate their experiences
  - ii. Reflective observation should be a continuous process and should ideally happen throughout the student's experience in their position
- b. Abstract Conceptualization stage:
  - i. This is where the faculty advisor can help students connect their reflective thoughts to theory learned in the classroom and ask them to articulate how they are using these constructs in their work environment
  - ii. This also would ideally be practiced throughout the student's experience
  - iii. Faculty guidance is crucial in this stage, as they are the key components to foster that "academic to workplace" connection
- c. Active Experimentation
  - i. Faculty can encourage student to continue to think in experimental ways. Perhaps by asking students how they will implement what they learned from their experience in future situations

- ii. This can work really well in a summative type of assignment that asks the student to summarize and articulate pieces from their whole experience
- iii. Faculty should see evidence that the student will be able to take their learned experience with them and apply them in the future

## **SECTION SIX: BEST PRACTICES IN FACULTY ADVISING – IN PRACTICE**

### **XIV. Slide 14: Best Practices for Faculty Internship Advising**

- a. Co-create learning objectives with intern
  - i. [covered more in-depth on next slide]
  - ii. These are essential for best practices and should be a standard practice
  - iii. Institutions and different disciplines will refer to these in different terms, but essentially, learning objectives should be created based on the student's position description, program outcomes/requirements, and competencies students would like to strengthen based on their desired career goals
- b. Design a "Learning Plan" that includes objectives, goals, and expectations
  - i. [covered more in-depth on next slide]
  - ii. Also called "Learning Agreements" or "Learning Contracts" – each institution and discipline may refer to this in other terms as well
- c. Check in with the student throughout the experience
  - i. Experiment with different modes of communication
  - ii. Change modes of communication based on discipline and individual student
- d. Promote student reflection through conversations, correspondence, required assignments, etc.
  - i. Experiment with different means of reflection depending on discipline, student preferences, and program requirements
  - ii. Regardless of the methods used to foster reflection, reflection should always remain at center of all interactions and assignments
- e. Evaluate the student's experience from academic lens
  - i. Provide a way for the student to turn in the assignment and answer questions they have about the requirements – faculty should set them up for success in this part (as the bulk of the internship should be focused on the experience itself)

- ii. Follow institution's process for recommending a grade for an internship experience

XV. Slide 15: The "Learning Plan"

a. Designing a "Learning Plan":

i. Include learning objectives

- 1. Recommended to be co-created by the student and faculty advisor
- 2. 3-5 are suggested, depending on the length of the experience
- 3. These are considered academic learning objectives as well as the learning opportunities in the internship

ii. Define student SMART goals

- 1. These can be personal or professional goals and should be created to help the student focus on what they hope to gain from the experience in relation to their personal or professional life
- 2. Suggested to be created by the student, reviewed by faculty advisor (2-3)
- 3. Must be: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Timely

iii. Define expectations:

- 1. Communication expectation throughout the experience (face-to-face, email, phone calls, Blackboard, etc.)
- 2. Review requirements for additional assignments and provide a rubric for grading purposes
- 3. Dates and deadlines:
  - a. Discuss evaluation dates and deadlines (possibly distributed from the internship coordinator)
  - b. Discuss deadlines for assignments, the submittal process, and the final grading process
  - c. Don't be afraid to be flexible with dates and deadlines – it may be beneficial to co-create these so the student can take more ownership of their experience

4. Confirm with the student that the expectations are clear and provide contact information for follow-up questions and correspondence throughout the experience

**SECTION SEVEN: CLOSING**

XVI. Slide 16: Questions & Final Comments

## Appendix C

### David Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory

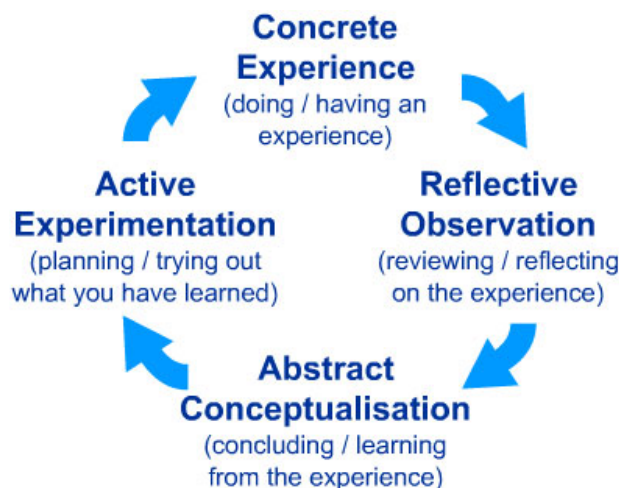
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#### The Experiential Learning Cycle

Kolb views learning as a four-stage, holistic, continuous process where a participant acquires knowledge from each new experience.

According to Kolb, effective learning can only take place when an individual completes a cycle of the four stages – in which the order of the stages is obsolete. According to Kolb's theory, a person cannot learn by simply observing or reading.

1. **Concrete Experience:** The individual encounters a new experience that creates an opportunity for learning. In this stage, the individual is actively participating in the experience.
2. **Reflective Observation:** In this stage, the individual reflects on the experience before making any judgments. Particular notice is paid to any inconsistencies between experience and understanding. The goal is for the individual to review the situation and find meaning behind the experience.
3. **Abstract Conceptualization:** In abstract conceptualization, the individual develops theories to explain their experience. This analysis often gives rise to a new idea or changes a preexisting concept. In this stage, the individual identifies recurring themes, problems and/or issues that will help them with new learning experiences. The goal is to create concepts that they can apply in the future.
4. **Active Experimentation:** In this stage, individuals apply what they learned in the experience to another situation. They use their theories to solve problems, make decisions, and influence people and/or events. The learner takes risks and implements theories to see what will result (experimentation). The goal is to test the concepts in different and new situations to discover ways to improve.



## Appendix D

The purpose of this survey is to gauge whether or not faculty advisors feel more equipped to advise student interns in their discipline. Results of this survey should be used to make adjustments to the content and delivery of the training for the purpose of continuous improvement.

Distribute this survey (either on paper or via an online link) after the faculty advisor training session. Survey is meant to be anonymous to elicit authentic candid feedback.

### Faculty Advisor Training Exit Survey

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Presenter/Trainer: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** Indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The objectives of the training were clearly defined.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participation and interaction were encouraged.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The topics and content covered were relevant to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The content was organized and easy to follow.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The materials distributed were helpful.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This training experience will be useful in my work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The trainer was knowledgeable about the training topics.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The training objectives were met.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The time allotted for the training was sufficient.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The meeting room was conducive to the format of the training.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What did you like most about the training?

What aspects of the training could be improved?

How do you hope to change your practice as a result of this training?

Please share other comments or expand on previous responses here:

Thank you for your feedback!



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